

Who benefits from flood management policies?

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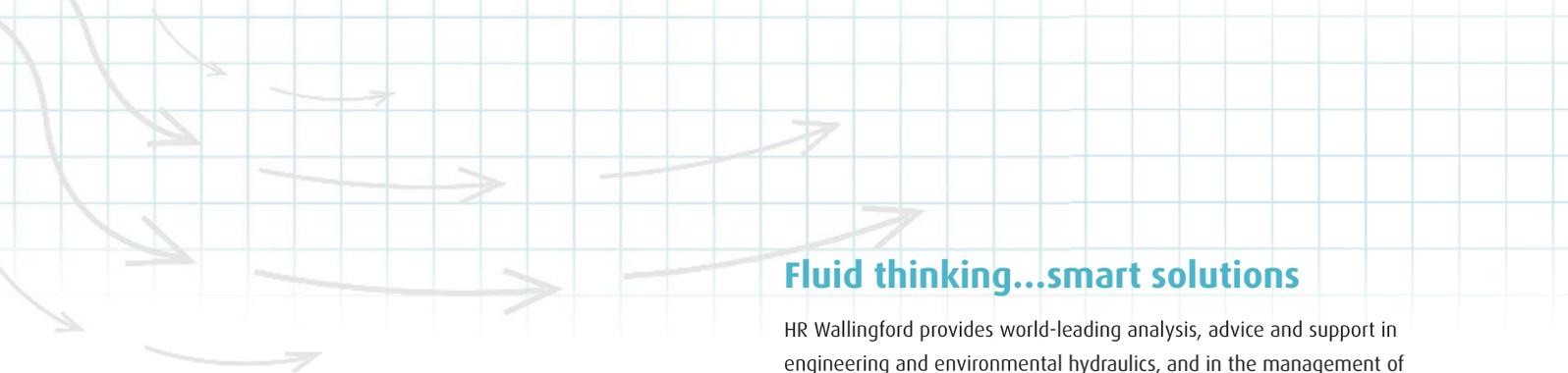
Large parts of England are at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. Areas particularly at risk include the Humber corridor, the coastal areas in the South and East, low lying areas in East Anglia and the South West and major estuaries. Some 2.1 million properties are estimated to be in flood risk areas, affecting 4.3 million people (8.7 per cent of the population) and of these, around 469,000 properties are at significant risk of flooding (affecting 900,000 people).

Defra has policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) in England and the over-arching policy is *to reduce risks to people, property and the environment from flooding and coastal erosion through the provision of defences, flood forecasting and warning systems, increased flood resilience of property, beneficial land management changes and discouragement of inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding*. Managing flood risk therefore encompasses a broad range measures but is not restricted to public intervention alone and factors such as flood insurance are also important within a risk management context.

FCERM measures provide a complex mix of public and private benefits to, and burdens on, society over long time periods. However, there is currently only limited understanding and evidence of how different interest groups and sectors benefit from public investments (or decisions not to invest) in reducing flood and coastal erosion risks. A series of case study assessments have been undertaken to provide evidence of the size and scale of benefits, costs and other intangible resource flows between different sector and interest groups. The case studies cover a broad mix of FCERM activities including the provision of defences, flood forecasting and warning, emergency response, flood resilience, spatial planning and flood insurance. The case study findings improve understanding of winners and losers, help to identify distributional imbalances, and can serve to inform future FCERM policies and programmes.

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Keywords: Flood risk management, Defra/EA R&D



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